

Post 5-2-68

Wire Tapping Outlawed, Says Czech Official

PRAGUE, May 1—Czechoslovakia's interior minister has announced that wire-tapping equipment is now outlawed. He also promised to purge old-line Stalinists.

"Three or four deputy ministers together with other top officials will be replaced," Interior Minister Josef Pavel told the Czech news agency CTK yesterday. He added that personnel changes would go "down to the ground."

Under the democratization process of the new liberal regime, Pavel told newsmen, it is forbidden and punishable to use "bugging equipment" to monitor citizens' activities.

"Censorship no longer exists in Czechoslovakia," he said,

with the exception of guarding state secrets.

The shake-up in the police department came to light on April 12, when Pavel disclosed that he was separating the secret police from the regular civilian service. This move was recommended in the Action Program of Party chief Alexander Dubcek.

Pavel said the interior ministry had been controlled "by one person of the Communist party's Central Committee," but that the ministry is now "subordinated to the government and directly responsible" to Premier Oldrich Cernik.

Wheat Question

The Czech news agency GTK also carried a report yesterday denying a United Press International story citing a Soviet cutoff of wheat shipments to Czechoslovakia.

But Zdenek Mlynar, a member of the Communist Party Secretariat, told newsmen "we did not get the quarterly shipment from the Soviet Union this time."

[The Soviet news agency Tass carried the CTK denial and said the original report was aimed at causing discord.]

Mlynar said that although the Soviets had halted the wheat shipments, they also offered the new government a \$400 million hard currency loan.

Mlynar explained the apparent conflict between the Soviet moves as the result of Moscow's "nervousness" about the future course Prague may take.

May Day

Today's May Day parading here included hippies, a man carrying an Israeli flag, children in Boy Scout uniforms, and the chief of the Communist party signing autographs. Banners proclaimed "We

want democracy to its roots" and a boy on his father's shoulders carried a placard reading: "Tell me the truth now so I don't have to get it when I'm grown up."

People left the usual Soviet flags in storage. Informed sources said organizers decided to replace the traditional Soviet hammer and sickle flags with plain red Communist banners plus the red, white and blue Czechoslovak flags as a sign of an independent policy.

Dubcek proclaimed in a speech:

"The international position of our socialist republic is firmly safeguarded by the system of socialist states at the side of our great ally, the Soviet Union."